

Robin Hood Truck Stop and Restaurant, and Robin Hood Oil Company.

In addition to his entrepreneurial endeavors, Mr. Hood served as mayor of the town of Benson from 1971–1979. He was instrumental in the development and growth of Benson, where he was a strong advocate for the community. He played a key role in developing a water line to Benson from the Neuse River and argued strongly for 1–40's current route near Benson over a counterproposal that would have taken it further north. He was named Benson's Citizen of the Year in 1973.

Whitley remained an active member of the community long after his public service. He was a member of the Benson Lions Club, a past patron of Eastern Star, a member of the Benson Stock Club, a member of the Benson GBO, an active member of Benson Baptist Church and a past deacon. He was also a prominent Mason and Shriner.

My best memories of Whitley involve his work as director of the Sudan Clowns for almost 50 years. Whitley loved to bring joy to people's faces and to spread laughs and good cheer to those he met. Many of the Dunn community are familiar with "Happy" the clown and the clown cards he would leave behind; I know that I will never forget the happiness he brought to those around him and I am sure his bright light will not soon be forgotten by others in our community.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me today in honoring the life of Mr. Robin Whitley Hood, a beacon of his community and a true exemplar of civic involvement. May he even in passing bring a smile to his loved ones' faces for the wonderful legacy he has left behind.

EXCERPTS FROM TESTIMONY
GIVEN BY LORNE CRANER

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I submit excerpts from the testimony of Lorne Craner, president of the International Republican Institute, IRI, speaking before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on June 10.

Mr. Craner spoke with great clarity about a number of important issues regarding the promotion of human rights and democracy in the context of U.S. foreign policy.

He opened with reflections on President Reagan's conviction that freedom is a birthright—one that ought to be enjoyed by all peoples. Mr. Craner testified:

"President Reagan said 'We must be staunch in our conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings. So states the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights . . .'

"But Reagan went beyond simply noting the importance of freedom in the speech. He laid out a strategy to achieve it, stating that 'If the rest of this century is to witness the gradual growth of freedom and democratic ideals, we must take actions to assist the campaign for democracy. While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change, we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate objectives and to take concrete actions to move towards them.'

"Further, he enunciated a method to help achieve the strategy, saying 'the objective I propose is quite simple . . . to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their differences through peaceful means.'

"Reagan counseled patience, noting that 'the task I've set forth will long outlive our generation.' He would be characteristically modest about his role, but within eight years, the number of 'free countries' in Freedom House's survey had risen to 76, compared to 51 at the time of his inaugural, 'partly free countries' had risen to 65 from 51, and 'not free' countries had declined from 60 to 42. Most dramatically, the Soviet bloc had disintegrated. While many West Europeans now claim it was engagement—exemplified by 'Ostpolitik'—that ended the Cold War, those who lived under Soviet domination instead give much credit to Pope John Paul II, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan . . ."

Later in his testimony Mr. Craner remarked on the critical role that Congress plays in pressing the State Department to elevate these issues of human rights and religious freedom . . . issues which often are downplayed in the name of bilateral relations. Craner noted:

"Indeed, for more than 30 years, beyond the inception of NED, Congress has truly been at the forefront on issues of human rights. For example, the State Department Bureau I headed, for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, was also founded by an act of Congress. On many occasions the Congress has actually led on human rights and democracy policy. The annual State Department Country Reports on Human Rights were established over the objections of the then-administration. I referred earlier to Congressional action on human rights early in the Reagan administration. In the 1990s and this decade, a number of the entities within the State Department intended to advance human rights—the Office of International Religious Freedom, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism—were also established over administration opposition. The recent Advance Democracy Act was opposed by the then-administration. Legislative action regarding human rights in various countries, from China to El Salvador to South Africa, has been taken by Congress despite the administration's wishes. It is especially important to note that passage of such legislation was undertaken by Congresses with Democratic or Republican majorities during both Democratic and Republican administrations."

Lastly, he spoke compellingly of the need for "Strong, consistent, leadership on democracy and human rights from the top of the administration . . ." He gave several reasons:

"First, much attention is paid to the administration's funding levels for democracy programming. This is substantively important, given what democratic foreign leaders point to as the results of America's democracy programming over the past quarter century, from Chile to the Philippines to Poland, Mongolia, Serbia, Georgia, Moldova, and many others. Here in Washington, it is also seen as a symbolic measure of U.S. support for democracy in countries in remaining repressive countries such as Cuba, Belarus, Iran, and Burma. In in-

stances such as these, Congress can exert its influence by earmarking funds certain countries. The implementation of such earmarks can be greatly influenced by the second reason for strong presidential/administration support: the message sent within the bureaucracy.

"Too often it is easy for the career bureaucracy to minimize democracy and human rights because these elements complicate other bilateral issues, such as economic or trade or security relationships. Skilled diplomats know that it is possible to achieve both. But clear statements by the President and Secretary of State on democracy and human rights contribute to the degree to which efforts will be made by U.S. Country Teams to implement programs and seek to garner international support for those seeking to better their conditions under authoritarian regimes. Under President Clinton and Secretary Albright and President Bush and Secretaries Powell and Rice, for example, U.S. diplomats understood that human rights and democracy were strong emphases of U.S. foreign policy.

"Third, and perhaps most important, the degree of administration support for democracy and human rights is watched closely by autocratic and totalitarian foreign leaders. They are trying to discern how to manage relations with the world's most powerful country. When American leaders diminish our emphasis and consistency on democracy and human rights, foreign leaders understand that they don't have to do as much on those issues to maintain good relations with Washington."

Mr. Craner closed by noting that the Obama administration has gotten off to a weak start on these issues, and that this has not gone unnoticed by those to whom U.S. policy in this regard matters most . . . "democrats and dissidents."

Craner remarked, "Commenting on President Obama's delayed meeting with the Dalai Lama, former Czech President Vaclav Havel said of Beijing 'they respect it when someone is standing his ground, when someone is not afraid of them. When someone soils his pants prematurely, then they do not respect you more for it.'

"Cyberdissident Ahed Al-Hendi stated that previously, in Syria 'when a single dissident was arrested . . . at the very least the White House would condemn it. Under the Obama administration, nothing.'

"Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim said 'Our concern is that the Obama administration is perceived to be softening on human rights . . . once you give a perception that you are softening on human rights, then you are strengthening the hands of autocrats to punish dissidents throughout the world.'

"According to Egypt's Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 'George W. Bush is missed by activists in Cairo and elsewhere who—despite possible misgivings about his policies in Iraq and Afghanistan—benefited from his firm stance on democratic progress. During the time he kept up pressure on dictators, there were openings for a democratic opposition to flourish. The current Obama policy seems weak and inconsistent by contrast.'

I share Mr. Craner's concerns and echo his charge to Congress to stand in the gap even in the face of an administration that is struggling to find its voice on matters which ought to be central in American foreign policy.